



KEYS TO EFFECTIVE HEALTH PROMOTION



Key #2: Data

What is data?

Data is information that is collected about your program. All health promotion programs should include data as an integral part of the program plan.

Why should you care about data?

Data tells the health promotion story. Data is the tangible evidence of a program's impact.

Building data into health promotion

Why bother? You need data to:

- ⇒ Evaluate whether or not your program is working.
- ⇒ Answer the 'so what?' about the need for a program.
- ⇒ Provide information to your Commander about the impact of the program.
- ⇒ Write a budget justification so you can secure program resources.
- ⇒ Use program resources efficiently and market your program more effectively.

Where to begin

- ⇒ **MAKE A PLAN** to collect the data: decide what, when, and how data will be collected.
- ⇒ Find out what data is **ALREADY BEING COLLECTED**.
 - For example: use dairy sales data in the dining facility to measure the impact of a milk marketing/dairy month campaign.
- ⇒ Start collecting **JUST A FEW** small pieces of information. Be creative!
 - For example: BMI, APFT scores (before & after), tobacco quit rates
- ⇒ Although it's best to plan data collection before a program begins, it's **NEVER TOO LATE TO START** collecting data.

Innovative data strategies

- ⇒ Use local college/graduate students to help collect, input, and analyze program data.
- ⇒ If your MTF has an internship program, get to know the Internship Director. Take advantage of intern resources – including having the Director and/or interns implement the data collection plan for your program.
- ⇒ Use data to let the 1SGs and DIs know about your program's impact on Soldiers. Present this information at their monthly/quarterly meetings.
- ⇒ Use creative follow-up strategies to get data. Phone calls can be effective, but also consider email, mailed surveys with return postage provided, and going to the units in person to collect the information.
- ⇒ Make data collection 'fun' for program participants.
 - For example: use a team approach – the team with the 'best' overall results gets some sort of award or recognition.
- ⇒ **ALWAYS** relate the impact of your program to readiness.